

OF THE DELAWARE INDIANS

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found guilty and the wife was "permitted to draw off his right shoe and left stocking... she then tears off the lappet that covers his private parts, gives him a kick behind, and so drives him out of the house...."⁷⁶ Husbands could punish adulterous wives by thrashing them, or could obtain a divorce by bringing them before the chief or sachem. The woman's hair was cut off, she was deprived of her property, "and perhaps even of her life, if found guilty by the sachem."⁷⁷ But Denton remarked: "It is no offense for their married women to lie with another man provided she acquaint her husband, or some of her nearest Relations with it, but if not it is accounted such a fault that they sometimes punish it with death."⁷⁸ One of the culturally sanctioned mechanisms for obtaining revenge upon an adulterous spouse was suicide.⁷⁹ A man's retaliation for adultery could also be seduction of the adulterer's wife. If and when the injured husband was successful in this venture, he made the fact public so that the original adulterer would be held up for public scorn.⁸⁰

A widow, prior to remarriage, whether his wife had died of natural or other causes, had to recompense her relatives for her loss.⁸¹ The duration of mourning was about a year.⁸² A widow during this time had to support herself; she could not be given meat since a hunter's weapons were supposed to fail if he had given meat to a widow.⁸³ When the year had passed, the deceased one's soul left the earth and remarriage could follow.

Death

As soon as a person died the fact of death was spread throughout the community by a crier. The crier was a woman especially appointed and paid for her services.⁸⁴ This announcement evoked loud outcries and lamentations from the general populace. These lamentations were continued intermittently in the house where the deceased lay until burial.⁸⁵ In recent times and perhaps earlier the moccasin game was played in the dwelling where the corpse lay.⁸⁶ The body was not buried at once because it was necessary to give the supernatural forces an opportunity to restore life to the corpse.⁸⁷ The length of time the body was kept varied with the season; it was three days in summer and seven in winter.⁸⁸ During this interval the corpse was dressed in new clothes and richly adorned and painted. Before noon on the day of burial a number

⁷⁶De Hasieres, 1909, p. 108.

⁷⁷Ibid.; see also Pastorius, 1912, p.

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⁷⁸Denton, 1945, p. 9.

⁷⁹Penn, 1912, p. 232; Heckewelder, 1881, pp. 258-59; Lookiel, 1794, p. 58.

⁸⁰Zeisberger, 1910, p. 77.

⁸¹Penn, 1912, p. 232.

⁸²Pastorius, 1912, p. 435; Holm, 1834, p. 143; Brickell, 1842, p. 49; Trowbridge MS.

⁸³Zeisberger, 1910, p. 88; Lookiel,

1794, p. 64.

⁸⁴Lindstrom, 1925, p. 249; Heckewelder, 1881, p. 269.

⁸⁵Zeisberger, 1910, p. 89; Heckewelder, 1881, p. 269.

⁸⁶Harrington, 1913, p. 215; Kinietz, 1946, p. 72.

⁸⁷Trowbridge MS; Kinietz, 1946, p. 51;

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⁸⁸Lindstrom, 1925, p. 249; Heckewelder, 1881, p. 269; Trowbridge MS; Kinietz, 1946, p. 51; M.B.